

The Foolishness of "The Ray of Creation"

By Peter David Smith

The metaphysical idea of a “Ray of Creation” was taught in groups by disciples or followers of the teachings of George Gurdjieff. It was a system of describing the structure of the universe in a series of levels or concentric circles.

The Moon goes around the Earth, the Earth goes around the Sun, the Sun is one of the stars which go around the centre of the Galaxy. In Gurdjieff’s Ray of Creation system “The Stars” are differentiated from “The Sun” and that immediately tells you that the Ray of Creation is *not* about how the physical universe is objectively structured. Instead the “Ray” is based on the *illusory* structure of human subjective perception of the universe.

So, in that subjective perception “The Stars” are something different to “The Sun” and the universe is like a ladder leading up into heaven where stars have “Twelve Laws” for no other reason than a long believed association, symbolically, between stars and the number twelve.

It is from that symbolic association between stars and the number twelve that the number system employed by Gurdjieff derives. We are given to believe that “The Stars” are halfway between God and Humans. Therefore, it follows in a Pataphysical way, that the number twelve must be halfway between the One-ness of God and the number of our Earthly human lives. So we then follow a method designed to appear almost scientific.

We place a number halfway between One-ness and twelve. That would be a Six. Then a number halfway between the Six and the One-ness. That would be a Three.

So, at that stage we have established a number pattern of: one, three, six, twelve. All based on the idea of God being One and the stars being, supposedly, twelve. The pattern has been built by our credulous minds by finding halfway steps between other numbers, like Achilles and the Tortoise.

Extrapolating, pataphysically, from that we can then include The Sun, The Moon and The Earth in their orbits around a common centre. So, continuing the number system on downwards we come to 24 at the Sun level, 48 at the level of the Planet Earth and 96 at the level of The Moon.

Other planets and moons don’t matter because this system is built from our subjective perception of the heavens extrapolated after the style of science. Therefore The Ray of Creation is the ladder from God down to *our* planet and moon. Other planets and moons will need to find their own ladders. We are only concerned with the ladder being dangled down to here, on Earth, Midgard, possibly Malkuth or Yesod.

John Newlands was the chemist who proposed in 1863 that the chemical elements were arranged in patterns following what he decided to call a “Law of Octaves”. Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin was the astronomer who figured out in 1925 that stars are composed primarily of Hydrogen and Helium. Gurdjieff’s system built on these discoveries to describe the levels in the “Ray of Creation” as “Hydrogen Levels” like H1, H3, H6, H12 etc.

At first glance it might appear plausible but actually it is merely juggling with ideas borrowed from science. If we try to apply these ideas in any actual science it doesn’t work. The element sequence of 1,

3, 6, 12, 24 would be: hydrogen lithium carbon magnesium and chromium, which has no particular significance.

In addition, the “Law of Octaves” turns out to be less than the key to the structure of all matter and, instead, is merely a partial guideline to some of the elements.

So, It makes far more sense to class the “Ray of Creation” in its proper place as an exploration of a symbolic universe composed, not of stars but rather of our ideas *about* the stars and the heavens.

And so, since this whole system is built in our minds, we can come to the realisation that we are looking in the wrong direction.

We need to look for the ladder to the absolute by turning our gaze within.

Inside of our consciousness is our IDEA of the sun, the stars, the universe, the fabric of reality and the source of it all.

The numbers may very well be a distraction. I can arrange Tarot cards so that The Fool card, number zero, is at the top or in the centre. I can place cards at the levels of three and six and twelve and I can add up the numbers. Three plus six plus twelve is Twenty-One and the Fool card at the top, or in the centre, makes Twenty-Two.

The number 48 at “Planet Level” divides by the “Rule of Thirds” into 16 (a falling tower) and 32 (two standing towers). Thirty-Two plus the Twenty-Four of “Sun Level” makes Fifty-Six, the number of cards in the Minor Arcanum of the Tarot pack.

These recurring patterns in numbers are definitely a distraction. I have seen people getting lost in the numbers. It's like Foucault's Pendulum. If we ever want to make progress in understanding our own souls we need to take all those number systems with a big pinch of salt. The dialectic of the Tao is the important bit. The rest of it is the infinite distraction of the Glass Bead Game. We should be more concerned with taking control of our own nature to become a better person.

Deep inside our inner universe is a fool who needs to develop into wisdom.

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